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THE MUSICAL TIMES, And Singing Class Circular.

FEBRUARY 1st, 1866.

The Letters of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Translated from the Collection of LUDWIG NOHL by Lady WALLACE. 2 Vols. London: Longmans, Green, and Co.

(SECOND NOTICE.)

THE blighting effect of individual patronage is so painfully apparent in the careers of Weber and Mozart, that we cannot but wonder at the innate power of these two artists, who, despite its depressing influence, could bequeath such immortal works to posterity. Those petty German despots who, incapable of appreciating the highest genius, could bestow their favours upon any pretender who flattered their vanity, and would descend almost to the level of a menial to retain office, could scarcely have imagined the despicable figure they would cut when the history of the world's great men came to be written; and private letters, long buried in the records of families, rose up in judgment against their tyranny and oppression. The treasures of free thought contained in the confidential correspondence of an artist bound body and mind to the service of a patron, should be taken to heart by all; for it is here, and here only, that we can see how those contemptible cabals and intrigues which beset the life of a man who it is feared will become dangerously successful, may too often urge him into a life of licence and recklessness which is afterwards triumphantly dwelt upon by his detractors. Mozart, of all men, could ill brook the insolence of those who, placed above him in position, were so immeasurably below him in intellect; and believing that genius, if not fostered and encouraged, should at least be unfettered in its aspirations, there can be little wonder that the household of the Archbishop of Salzburg must have been as uncongenial to his taste and talents as can well be imagined. His position there, however, ranking a little above the lacqueys, should be told by Mozart himself. In a letter to his father from Vienna, he says:

Now as to the Archbishop. I have a charming room in his house; Brunetti and Cecarelli lodge in another—*che distinzione!* My neighbour is Herr von Kleinmayr, who, on my arrival, loaded me with all sorts of civilities, and really is a charming man. We dine at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, unluckily rather too early an hour for me. Our party consists of the two valets, the Comptroller, Herr Zetti, the confectioner, the two cooks, Cecarelli, Brunetti, and my insignificant self. N.B.—The two valets sit at the head of the table. I have, at all events, the honour to be placed above the cooks; I almost believe I am back in Salzburg. At table all kinds of coarse, silly joking go on; but no one jokes with me, for I never say a word, or if I am obliged to speak, I do so with the utmost gravity; and when I have dined I go away. There is no supper-table at night, but we each receive three ducats, so we cannot be very prodigal. The Archbishop is so good as to add to his lustre by his household, whom he prevents earning their living, and yet never pays them an equivalent.

Again, in reply to one of his father's letters, he says:

What you write as to my presence contributing to the vanity of the Archbishop is in so far just; but of what use is that to me? I cannot subsist on it. Believe me, I am right in saying that here he serves only as a *screen* to me. What distinction, pray, does he confer on me? Herr von Kleinmayr and Bönike have a table apart with the illustrious Count Arco. It would be a distinction were I at this table: but not where I now am with the valets, who, when not occupying the *first seats at table*, light the lustres, open the doors, and wait in the ante-room (*when I am within*), and with cooks too. If we are summoned to any house where there is a concert, Herr Angerbauer has orders to watch outside, and when the Salzburg gentlemen arrive, he then calls a lacquy to precede them that they may enter. On hearing Brunetti mention this in the course of conversation, I thought to myself, only wait till it is my turn. So the

other day when we were desired to go to Prince Gallitzin's, Brunetti said to me, in his usual polite manner, "You must be here this evening at seven o'clock, that we may go together to Prince Gallitzin's, Angerbauer will take us there." I answered, "Very well; but if I am not here exactly at seven o'clock, pray proceed there yourself, and don't wait for me. I know where to find you, and we are sure to see each other at the concert." I purposely went alone, because I really feel ashamed to go about with him. When I arrived I found Angerbauer waiting to direct the lacquy to show me in. I, however, took no notice either of Angerbauer or the lacquy, but passed straight on through the rooms into the concert-room (all the doors being open), and going up at once to the Prince, I made him my bow, and then remained standing and conversing with him. I had totally forgotten my friends Brunetti and Cecarelli, for they were nowhere to be seen, inasmuch as they were leaning on the wall, hidden behind the orchestra, not daring to move a step in advance.

It was scarcely to be expected that such disgraceful independence as this could long be tolerated in a household where men of intellect were content to be classed with the lacqueys. The climax, which had for some time been in preparation, came at last, and Mozart was summoned into the presence of the Archbishop. Not having the means of paying the expenses of his journey from Vienna, we must state, however, before commencing the scene with his enraged patron, that he had postponed his departure for a few days, and had been advised to say that the post-carriage was full.

When I entered the room, (he writes,) the first thing he said was, "Well, when are you going, young fellow?" I replied, "I intended to have gone to-night, but every place in the post-carriage is already engaged." Then came all in a breath, that I was the most dissipated fellow he knew, no man served him so badly as I did, and he recommended me to set off the same day, or else he would write home to stop my salary. It was impossible to get in a syllable, for his words blazed away like a fire. I heard it all with calmness; he actually told me to my face the deliberate falsehood that I had a salary of 500 florins—called me a ragamuffin, a scamp, a rogue. Oh, I really cannot write all he said. At last my blood began to boil, and I said, "Your Grace does not appear satisfied with me." "How! do you dare to threaten me, you rascal? There is the door, and I tell you I will have nothing more to do with such a low fellow." At last I said, "Nor I with you." "Begone!" said he; while I replied as I left the room, "The thing is settled, and you shall have it to-morrow in writing."

Released from the service of the Archbishop, Mozart conjured up a glowing vision of future success; yet, fettered as he was by the continual remonstrances of his father, who looked upon the acquisition of present gain as the principal object in life, he shortly found that he had only freed himself from one master in order to bind himself to another. Stern men of the world, who think that genius is to be bought and sold at the price it will fetch in the market, will believe that Leopold Mozart was somewhat badly treated by his son, inasmuch as his letters abundantly prove that he would not bend himself to meet the requirements of the moment, when such a course of action involved a lowering of his dignity as an artist. "The grand principle here," he says, in a letter to his father, "is not to make oneself too cheap, for that is utter ruin." Again he writes, "I have now three pupils, which brings me eighteen ducats a month; for I no longer count by twelve lessons, but by the month. * * * I could get several more on these terms, but I only want one other, four being quite enough, which would make twenty-four ducats, or 102 florins, 24 kreuzers."

But another source of altercation with his father was his avowed intention of marrying, in spite of the precarious nature of his income. Aloysia Weber was lost to him; but his love for her sister Constanze seemed fully equal to his former attachment. To show how this passion gradually grew, let us begin with his virtuous indignation at certain malicious reports on the subject, which, we presume, had reached the ears of his father.

Because I live with them, (he says,) I am to marry the daughter. Nothing was said as to my being in love with her, for that was

entirely passed over—merely that I lodge in their house and am to be married! If ever there was a time when I thought less of marriage in my life, it is at the present moment. I have no wish whatever to have a rich wife; but even if I could make my fortune by marriage, I could not pay my court to any one at present, having very different things in my head. God has not bestowed talents on me to invest them in a rich wife, and to waste my youth in idleness. I am just beginning to live, and shall I myself embitter my life? I certainly have nothing to say against matrimony, but it would be a misfortune to me at this time.

A few months afterwards, however, he says—

My endeavours are directed at present to securing a small but certain income, which, together with what chance may put in my way, may enable me to live and—to marry.

There can be little doubt that with Leopold Mozart the Weber family were no favourites; and, as many passages in his son's letters will show, not without ample cause; for the conduct of the betrothed Constanze called forth occasional remonstrances from the young Mozart, who, even with the proverbially obscure vision of a lover, could not blind himself to her defects. When, at length, the father reluctantly gave his consent to the marriage, it was with the full understanding that his son must expect no further assistance from him, either then or hereafter. After his marriage Mozart writes—

My beloved Constanze, now, thank God, at last my wife, knew my circumstances long ago, and heard from me that I had nothing whatever to expect from you; but her attachment and love for me were so great that she gladly and joyfully sacrificed her future life to share my fate.

The public and private performances of Mozart in Vienna appear to have raised him to the highest rank as a pianist; without, however, gaining for him that certain position which his talent should have commanded. When pitted against Clementi—who, by the bye, was greatly underrated as a composer by Mozart—it is evident that the Emperor felt a sensation of extreme pride in being able to overmatch a foreigner who had already obtained so high a reputation. But the scene at court on this occasion should be told in Mozart's own words. After speaking slightly of Clementi as a player, he says,—

The Emperor (after we had stood on ceremony long enough) commanded him to begin, "The Holy Catholic Church first!" said he, Clementi being a Roman. He played a prelude and then a sonata, when the Emperor said to me, "*allons d'rauf los!*" ("Come, fire away!") I also played a prelude and some variations, The Grand Duchess handed us some sonatas by Paesello (wretchedly written out by himself), of which I was to play the *allegro*, and Clementi the *andante* and *rondo*. We then selected a theme from them and executed it on two pianos. It is rather remarkable that though I had borrowed Countess Thun's piano, I only played my *solos* on it by the Emperor's desire. N.B.—The other was out of tune, and three of the keys stuck fast. "*No matter*," said the Emperor. I take it in this light, which is indeed its best aspect, that the Emperor, knowing now my skill and science in music, only wished to have a little sport with the foreigner. I know from good authority that he was much pleased with me.

In spite of a powerful cabal against Mozart's opera, *Die Entführung*, the work appears to have been immensely successful, 1,200 florins having been brought into the theatre in two days. *Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Il Flauto magico*, however, had yet to come; and although Mozart's life in Vienna was not one of the steadiest, so vigorous was his faculty for composition that great works were produced by him even when his pursuit of pleasure was almost uncontrollable. But pecuniary difficulties pressed upon him too heavily to be disregarded; and in the latter part of his life the letters containing requests for money show too evidently the utter want of management in his domestic affairs. In a letter to Baroness von Waldstätten, he writes—

Highly esteemed Lady,—I am now in a fine dilemma; Herr von Tranner and I lately agreed to ask for a renewal of our bill for fourteen days. As every merchant does this kind of thing, unless he is the most disobliging man in the world, I was quite at ease, hoping by that time to have been able to borrow the sum, if I could not manage to pay it myself; and now Herr von Tranner to-day

sends to let me know that the person in question absolutely refuses to wait, and that if I do not pay the money before to-morrow he will *sue me at law*. Only think, dear lady, what a distressing occurrence this would be for me! I have no means of paying the money at present, not even so much as one half.

This letter ends with an earnest request that the Baroness will assist in preserving his reputation and good name. After being appointed chamber musician, with a salary of 800 gulden, it does not appear that he was at all enabled to release himself from his liabilities; for we find him repeatedly applying to his friend and brother Freemason, Herr Puchberg, for money. In one of these communications, he says: "If you have sufficient regard and friendship for me to succour me by the loan of one or two thousand gulden for a couple of years, at the usual rate of interest, you would extricate me from a mass of troubles." On this letter Puchberg has marked "17th June, 1788, sent 200 florins." Other letters of the same kind followed, the character of which may be judged by the following extract:—"If you can or will, however, extricate me from a *momentary difficulty*, pray do so for the love of God! Whatever you can spare will be welcome. Pray forget, if possible, my importunities, and forgive them." On this letter Puchberg has noted "8th April, 1790, sent twenty-five florins in bank-notes."

Constant applications like these would appear to prove undoubtedly that Mozart had some difficulty in providing himself with even the common necessities of life; but when we find that about the same period, in his correspondence with his father, he is continually pressing him to send him a "harlequin's costume" for the Carnival; and that private balls (one of which was given in his own house) were his especial delight, we see only one more proof how rarely providence is allied with the highest order of genius. At this time, however, it must be remembered that he suffered much mental anxiety from the impossibility he felt of degrading his talent to the level required by the music-publishers. In Holmes's *Life of the Composer*, we are told that, having been advised by Hofmeister, the publisher, to write in a more popular style, or he could not purchase his compositions, he replied, "Then I can make no more by my pen, and I had better starve and go to destruction at once." From this time we know that he plunged into indulgences which can only be accounted for by supposing that he found it necessary to battle against the constant fits of despondency which now took possession of him. He composed pantomimes and ballets, and danced in them himself; and there are many traditions of his having assumed various characters at the Carnival balls with the utmost success. It was scarcely to be expected, however, that with a nervous temperament, and the actual necessity of working a certain number of hours in the day or night, such a life could be long persevered in without serious injury to his health. No doubt the cabals formed against him—chiefly by Salieri and his satellites—must have seriously impaired his exertions for fame and profit. And yet his opera of *Figaro*—hustled out of Vienna, but brilliantly successful at Prague, where also *Don Giovanni* was originally produced—the Symphonies in C major, G major, and E flat major, besides numerous instrumental quartets and other chamber-compositions, all produced at this period, form a catalogue so rich that it seems a miracle how, with failing health and increasing anxieties, sufficient leisure could have been found for the task.

The last year of Mozart's life was one of the most

prolific in his brief career, *La Clemenza di Tito*, *Il Flauto Magico*, and the *Requiem*, having all been written within this time. It was during the composition of *Il Flauto Magico* that he received the commission—conveyed in so mysterious a manner—to set to work without delay upon a Requiem. The tall man, “dressed in sombre grey,” who was the bearer of the message, is now well known to have been a servant of Count Walsegg, who hoped by secretly obtaining Mozart’s composition, to pass himself off as the author of a Requiem expressly written in honour of the obsequies of his recently deceased wife. Mozart, however, became so absorbed in this, his last composition, that he allowed a superstitious feeling to take entire possession of him during the progress of the work; and repeatedly declared that he was writing the Requiem for himself. A temporary rest from his labours, which was effected by his wife, slightly restored him; but he soon again asked for his score; and a return of his illness was the result. The last written words of Mozart known to exist occur in the postscript of a letter to his wife: the quotation at the end is taken from the grand trio in *Il Flauto Magico*. He writes: “Kiss Sophie for me. To Siesmag I send two good fillips on the nose, and a hearty pull at his hair. A thousand compliments to Stoll. Adieu! ‘The hour strikes! Farewell! We shall meet again!’”

About the end of November, 1791, we are told by Herr Ludwig Nohl, “he came one evening into the ‘Silberne Schlange,’ in the Kärnthner Strasse, which he was in the habit of frequenting; he looked very pale, and shivered violently; so, after staying only a few minutes, he offered his wine to the landlord, Joseph Deiner, with whom he often conversed, saying, ‘Drink this and call on me to-morrow; winter is come, and we require firewood.’ But when Diener went next day he found Mozart in bed; and the maid told him that her master had become so much worse during the night that they had been obliged to send for the doctor. When Mozart heard Deiner’s voice, he sent for him, and said in a feeble voice, ‘Joseph, we can do nothing to-day but submit to doctors and apothecaries.’”

From that day he never left his bed. Sophie, Madame Mozart’s young sister, who helped to nurse the composer, has left a graphic account of his last illness. One morning, after a critical night had been passed, she went to his bedside, when he instantly exclaimed, “Oh! my dear Sophie, it is well that you are come, and you must stay to-night; you must see me die.” “I strove to control my feelings,” (she writes), “and to dissuade him from such thoughts; but to all I could say he only replied, ‘I have the taste of death on my tongue, I smell the grave; and who can comfort my Constanze if you don’t stay here?’” At night the crisis came. When his young nurse, after a short absence, returned to his room, “I found,” she says, “Süssmayr (a pupil of Mozart’s) sitting by Mozart’s bed. The well-known Requiem was lying on the coverlet; and Mozart was explaining to Süssmayr the mode in which he wished him to complete it after his death. He further charged his wife to keep his death secret until she had informed Albrechtsberger of it, for the situation (that of assistant at the Stephan Church) ought to be his before God and the world. Closset, the doctor, was long sought in vain, and was at length found in the theatre, but he waited till the end of the piece. He then came and ordered cold applications on Mozart’s

burning head, which gave him such a shock that he died without recovering consciousness. The last movement of his lips was an endeavour to indicate where the kettledrums should be used in the Requiem. I think I still hear the sound.”

On a rough stormy December day, with alternate showers of snow and rain, Mozart’s body was borne to the grave, around which not one friend on whom the composer had bestowed so much pleasure, could be seen to pay the last tribute to his memory. No tomb—not even a cross—marked the place where he rested; and to this day no one has been found to point out the precise spot where he was interred.

Mozart’s widow, many years afterwards, married M. von Nissen, the Danish counsellor; and Madame Sonnenberg (poor “Nannerl”) was in 1829 residing in Salzburg in straitened circumstances, a widow, bedridden, and quite blind. Here we know that she was found, during a tour in Germany, by the Novello family, who kindly presented her with a sum of money (raised by subscription in London) as a remembrance on her name-day “by some friends of her brother.”

The value attached to these records of artist-life cannot be too highly estimated; and if, by our extracts and remarks, we have drawn attention to the volumes themselves, our sole aim is attained. The moral, too, of such a work may help us more clearly to see how nations whose boast it is to give birth to genius, have too often, instead of lending it a fostering care, allowed it to remain neglected and forgotten until, by its uncontrollable power, it has forced itself through the crushing influences by which it has been surrounded, and asserted itself to the world at large.

MONDAY POPULAR CONCERTS.

THE first Concert of the eighth season was given on the 15th ult. at St. James’s Hall. The programme was entirely devoted to the works of Beethoven, and we may say that every composition was executed to perfection. Mr. Franklin Taylor, the pianist on the occasion, selected for his first appearance the Sonata in D, Op. 10, No. 3, and gave so chaste and artistic a reading of it that we are much mistaken if he do not shortly take his place as one of the first exponents of classical music in England. Herr Straus led the Quartet in E flat, No. 10, Op. 74, very finely; and he was ably supported by Herr L. Ries (second Violin), Mr. H. Webb (Viola), and M. Pague (Violoncello). The Serenade in D major, played by Messrs. Straus, H. Webb, and Pague, pleased so much that two movements were unanimously *encored*. The Sonata in A, Op. 12, No. 2, was admirably executed by Mr. Taylor and Herr Straus; but we regret to say that there was a perceptible diminution of the audience before it commenced. Mr. Sims Reeves gave the *Lieder Kreis* and *Adelaide* in his usual admirable manner; and was accompanied in the true Beethoven spirit by Mr. Benedict. At the second concert Beethoven’s Septett was given; Mr. Charles Hallé was the pianist, and Miss Robertine Henderson the vocalist.

MUCH interest was felt at the Meeting of the Bristol Madrigal Society, on the 18th ult., in consequence of the performance for the first time of the three Madrigals for which the prizes of the society have been lately awarded. Another important event, too, connected with this gathering was the appearance of the new conductor, Mr. D. Rootham, in place of the well-known and highly respected Mr. Corfe, to whose untiring exertions it is not too much to say, the Bristol Madrigal Society chiefly owes its success. The Choir on this occasion was a splendid one, and numbered 92 voices. Mr. Leslie’s composition “Thine eyes so bright,” which gained the first prize, was much applauded; and although it is by no means easy of execution, it was extremely well sung. Having seen the manuscripts of these works, we can, from our own knowledge, speak of their merits. Mr. Leslie’s Madrigal is musically of more importance than the others. It is written for six voices, and shows an intimate acquaintance with the best works of this kind. The entries of the voices are always effectively contrived; the phrases are bold, and the modulations are introduced as they should be—to give satisfactory variety to the work, rather than to show the composer’s science. We are particularly pleased with the phrase “Then guide me,” the 9th on E in the first soprano having a pleading effect thoroughly in accordance with the words. We hope shortly to have an opportunity of hearing Mr. Leslie’s work at the Concerts of his Choir, when we know that all the delicate shading so necessary in a composition of this character will be carefully observed. Mr. W. J. Westbrook’s Madrigal, which gained the